



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
Week of March 1, 2010**

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Busy Before the Break

JEFFERSON CITY – The Missouri General Assembly will adjourn for spring break the week of March 8, and I look forward to traveling throughout the district during our time away from the Capitol. It's always good to get a break from Jefferson City and spend time with the folks back home. I look forward to talking to you about any concerns or issues you want addressed during the second half of the legislative session.

We're spending more time on the floor these days actually debating bills now that many of them have moved out of their respective committees and onto the Senate calendar. In fact, we worked Wednesday evening on a huge economic development bill (MOSIRA) that I discussed in a previous column. I am a co-sponsor of Senate Bill 895, which has the potential to make our state a national leader in science and innovation by making our state attractive to high-tech companies and other leaders in science and innovation. It will spur economic development by linking research with production, creating incentives for expansion at places like the Mexico Research Park and the Mexico Plant Science Center.

This was also the last week we could introduce bills for the 2010 Session, and I introduced a bill to help school districts that have lost or cancelled school days because of the impact of the H1N1 influenza virus. Senate Bill 1021 gives these schools the option of not making up the lost days if a majority of members on the local board of education agrees. If a school district has schools that are in session for 12 months and cannot meet the minimum school calendar requirement because of missing days due to H1N1, the district can request a waiver from the Commissioner of Education.

I also introduced a Senate Concurrent Resolution aimed at helping an important manufacturing business in Hannibal that is threatened by high tariffs. Spartan Light Metal

Products has been an industry leader in magnesium custom die castings for the past 40 years. This family owned and operated business has been in operation since 1961 and employs more than 600 people. However, magnesium die casting plants are being harmed by the tariffs that have been placed on imported magnesium alloys by the U.S. International Trade Commission. These high tariffs allow our country's only magnesium producer to charge whatever price it wants for raw magnesium, which has driven many die casting plants out of business. In fact, these tariffs have given the advantage to foreign competitors who can buy magnesium at globally-competitive prices and export finished products to U.S. markets free of penalties, putting U.S. manufacturing jobs at risk. We have a number of other die casting facilities in northeast Missouri, and my legislation would help all of them compete in the global marketplace.

SCR 50 urges the President and Congress to lift the tariffs on die cast magnesium alloys from China and Russia or create a fair market by placing a similar tariff on imported assemblies and products made from die cast magnesium alloys.

We welcomed a large number of guests to our Capitol office this week, including representatives from our County Extension offices and our local public health departments; Tom Lemons, a dentist from Palmyra, visited during the Missouri Dental Association Day; Dr. Davis from Memphis; Lesa McCartney from Kirksville, with the University of Missouri Alumni Association Governing Board; Westminster students Caroline Slavine from Brashear and Misty Todd from LaGrange; home educators from Kirksville; Truman Agriculture Science students under the direction of Dr. Michael Seipel; Rich and Mike Riesenbeck from Golden Eagle Distributing in Hannibal; Greg Lloyd of Lloyd Distributing in Kirksville; Frank Salter of Hannibal, representing Missouri Preservation; Kraft plant managers from Kirksville; and members of the Holy Rosary School in Monroe City.

If you have any questions or comments about these or any other issues give my Capitol office a call at (573) 751-7852, send me an email at wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov, or drop a line to Room 434, State Capitol, 201 West Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101.